

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 119507 TOSEC 010206

FOLLOWING SENT SECSTATE, INFO CANBERRA, MAY 22, FROM VIENTIANE
RPTD TO YOU:

QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 3593

CANBERRA FOR HABIB

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAID, LA, US

SUBJECT: AID AND USAID IN LAOS

REF: STATE 199496

1. WE HAVE EVIDENTLY FAILED TO CONVEY THE REALITIES OF
THE SITUATION. FORMAL PROCEDURES DO NOT COME NATURALLY
TO LAO. THE FACTS ARE THAT THE FONMIN HAS TOLD US THE
PGNU WANTS THE 1951 AGREEMENT REVISED, USAID TERMINATED
AS A SEPARATE ORGANIZATION AND AID DISPENSED FROM THE
EMBASSY. THE PRIMIN HAS CONFIRMED THESE POINTS AS PGNU
POLICY. THE MINISTER OF ECONOMY AND PLANS HAS TOLD US
THAT THE CABINET LAST NIGHT HAD DECIDED IN PRINCIPLE ON
THE TERMINATION OF USAID. FORMAL PRESS ANNOUNCEMENT THIS
MORNING OF CABINET DECISIONS SAID JUST THAT. DEMONSTRATORS
HAVE BEEN OCCUPYING THE USAID COMPOUND FOR TWO DAYS WITH
THIS AS ONE OF THEIR MAJOR DEMANDS. THERE IS NO RPT NO
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ELEMENT IN LAOS SUPPORTING THE MAINTENANCE OF USAID AND

THE PL HAVE GOTTEN STUDENTS TO USE THIS AS AN EMOTIONAL RALLYING CRY.

2. WE ARE TOMORROW, MAY 23, CONFRONTED BY A LARGE RALLY AT THE STADIUM AND EXPECT THAT END OF USAID WILL BE A MAJOR THEME OF THE SPEAKERS. THEREFORE, UNLESS U.S. INDICATES WILLINGNESS TO TERMINATE USAID ON BASIS OF NEGOTIATIONS, WE KEEP ALIVE AN ISSUE WHICH ADDS CONSIDERABLE TENSIONS TO ATMOSPHERE. OTHERWISE, WE SIMPLY ENCOURAGE FURTHER DEMONSTRATIONS, FURTHER PRESSURES AND EVENTUALLY VIOLENCE WHICH WILL INDEED ENDANGER SAFETY OF AMERICANS. (WE TOO HAVE THIS RATHER IN MIND.) BY SHOWING WILLINGNESS TO RESPOND TO PGNU'S STATED POLICY WE DEFUSE THE WHOLE ISSUE. AND WHEN ALL IS SAID AND DONE WE CANNOT MAINTAIN A SEPARATE USAID MISSION IN A COUNTRY THAT DOESN'T WANT IT.

3. AS REGARDS THE RELEASE OF PERSONNEL IN SAVANNAKHET, THE TERMINATION OF USAID IS IRRELEVANT. WE HAVE TOLD PGNU FOUR DAYS AGO THAT WE WERE CLOSING PROVINCIAL OFFICES. MINISTERS ARE IN SAVANNAKHET NEGOTIATING WITH DEMONSTRATORS AND STONE HAS CALLED RAMSEY TO SAY THAT HE EXPECTS: A) AGREEMENT TO BE SIGNED TODAY AND B) PERMISSION FOR AMERICANS TO LEAVE BY NOON TOMORROW. CHAPMAN UNQUOTE. INGERSOLL

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